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NEW TACTICS AGAINST JAP BEETLE:

The U. S. Department of Agriculture has added an all-girl crew to its Japanese beetle inspection force and has stepped up its spraying program to keep the No. 1 insect hitch hiker from taking advantage of the great increase in airplane travel to invade territory far from the 125,000 square miles in the North East where now it is firmly entrenched. Heretofore only men have been stationed at airports in the heavily infested area to spot and destroy beetles found clinging to passengers, baggage, and cargo going aboard any plane bound for points south of Norfolk, Va., west of Cleveland, Ohio, or north of central Vermont. The Plant Quarantine Service also has expanded the treatment of baggage compartments and other compartments on planes to include the application of a DDT preparation that sticks to the sides, walls, and floor, killing any beetle that may come in contact with it. The inspectors continue to use aerosol bombs containing DDT against hitch hiking beetles that manage to get inside the baggage compartment. Still another addition to the annual campaign is spraying trees and shrubbery around airports where beetles abound. Air line officials cooperate in this effort to reduce the chances of beetles seeking to board a plane.

Airplanes, which have cut travel time from coast to coast from days to hours, probably offer the Jap beetle the best opportunity it ever has had to migrate to new fields. Although a strong flier, this beetle does not spread very far under its own power. However, it is expert at hopping rides on any man-made means of transportation. It entered the United States as a stowaway in soil around nursery stock shipped from Japan to New Jersey. Within a dozen years of its discovery it had become one of our most costly insect pests.

The Department of Agriculture and cooperating States began the program to retard the spread of the Japanese beetle in 1919. By that time the beetle was well established and all the plant quarantine officials could hope to do was to delay its spread from the relatively small infested area in the eastern part of the country. Enforcement of plant quarantine regulations set up for the purpose has largely prevented long distance movement by artificial means. Infestations discovered beyond the quarantined area have been suppressed by cooperative control to prevent their becoming new centers of spread. Natural spread of the Jap beetle cannot be stopped by any method now known. Each year there are minor extensions to the infested territory.

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